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DE RUEHAA #1009 2171040

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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1284

INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 4120

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1935

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1800

RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 2369

RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1388

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001009

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AFIN](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: SCO SUMMIT IN DUSHANBE: TURKMENISTAN WILL NOT ATTEND

REF: STATE 82513

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia Reed Curran for reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Per reftel request, Embassy delivered non-paper to Turkmenistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 1 regarding the August Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Dushanbe. Deputy Premier/Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov told the Charge August 4 that President Berdimuhamedov will not attend this year's SCO summit in Dushanbe. According to Meredov, President Berdimuhamedov attended last year's conference as an honored guest of the Kyrgyz president and was once again invited to attend this year as an honored guest. However, Turkmenistan does not even have observer status in the SCO, so it does not believe that its attendance at this year's event is appropriate. Meredov emphasized that Turkmenistan is a neutral country that does not like to get embroiled in political issues. Turkmenistan belongs to the UN and OSCE and thus participates in their events. It also attends CIS meetings, where it is an associate member. Other than that, Turkmenistan prefers to deal with other nations bilaterally.

¶2. (C) COMMENT: Turkmenistan's attendance at the 2007 Bishkek summit was unusual, and Meredov's explanation is fully consistent with Turkmenistan's neutral status. If Turkmenistan also senses a battle brewing on Manas airbase or on Iran's membership in SCO, it may also be seeking to stay out of the vicinity, unless it or its president receive pressure to support one side over another. END COMMENT.

CURRAN